

Case 3248

***Prositala* Germain, 1915 (Mollusca, Gastropoda): proposed precedence over *Massaihelix* Germain, 1913**

Bernard Verdcourt

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB, U.K.

A.C. van Bruggen

clo National Museum of Natural History, P.O. Box 9517, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands (e-mail: acvanbruggen@hetnet.nl)

Abstract. The purpose of this application, under Articles 23.9.3 and 81.2.3 of the Code, is to conserve the generic name *Prositala* Germain, 1915 for a group of African land snails (family CHAROPIDAE) by giving it conditional precedence over the little used senior subjective synonym *Massaihelix* Germain, 1913 whenever the type species of these genera are considered to be conspecific.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy: Mollusca; Gastropoda; Pulmonata; CHAROPIDAE; *Massaihelix*; *Prositala*; *Massaihelix butumbiana*; *Prositala fernandopoensis*; African land snails.

1. The name *Massaihelix* was proposed by Germain (1913, p. 352) as a subgenus of the genus *Halolimnohelix* to include a species of African land snail (family CHAROPIDAE). The type species by monotypy is *Helix butumbiana* von Martens, 1895 (p. 179). As far as we are aware, this name has only been used after Germain by the following authors: Thiele (1931, p. 696), Fischer-Piette (1947, p. 91), Zilch (1960, p. 647) and Verdcourt (1969, p. 180). *Massaihelix* is a misleading name as its type species is neither a helicid nor does it come from Massailand.

2. Germain (1915, p. 283) proposed the name *Sitala (Prositala) fernandopoensis* for what he considered to be another group of African land snails (family CHAROPIDAE). On the same page, Germain designated it as the type species of a new subgenus *Prositala*, which he described five pages later (p. 288).

3. Verdcourt (1983a, p. 179) examined a paratype of *Helix butumbiana* von Martens held in The Natural History Museum (London), type material of *Prositala fernandopoensis* (Germain) held in the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (Paris) and specimens collected by Å. Holm in East Africa. This study showed that *Helix butumbiana* and *Prositala fernandopoensis* are conspecific. Verdcourt reported his discovery by using the combination *Prositala butumbiana* when, according to nomenclatural priority, he should have used *Massaihelix butumbiana* as the valid name for this species of snail.

4. Before the discovery that *Helix butumbiana* and *Prositala fernandopoensis* were conspecific, the name *Prositala* was used for this group of land snails by Germain (1915, p. 288; 1916, p. 281), Connolly (1928, p. 538), Thiele (1931, p. 374) and Verdcourt (1972, p. 331).

5. After the discovery that *Helix butumbiana* and *Prositala fernandopoensis* were conspecific, the name *Prositala* was used for this group of land snails by Verdcourt (1983b, p. 220; 1984, p. 136; 1991, p. 356), De Winter (1990, p. 308), van Bruggen (1993, p. 106), Tattersfield et al. (2001, p. 1821) and van Bruggen & Van Goethem (2001) amongst others. Various recent compilers have mentioned both generic names (*Massaihelix* and *Prositala*), but have not taken into account recent work and have overlooked Verdcourt (1983a). Vaught (1989, pp. 73, 104) doubtfully placed *Massaihelix* as a subgenus of *Halolimnohelix* (HYGROMIIDAE) and *Prositala* as a subgenus of *Philalanka* in the ENDODONTIDAE. This action was followed by Millard (1997, pp. 93, 104). Schileyko (2001, p. 909) maintained *Prositala* and mentions '2 spp.' but on the same page synonymised *Massaihelix* with *Psichion* Gude, 1911, which is certainly not correct.

6. We propose that the generic name *Prositala* Germain, 1915, which is in widespread use, be given conditional precedence over the little-used name *Massaihelix* Germain, 1913 in accord with Article 81.2.3 of the Code. Commission approval will mean that if the two names are considered to be synonyms, *Prositala* becomes the valid name for the taxon.

7. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary power to give the name *Prositala* Germain, 1915 precedence over the name *Massaihelix* Germain, 1913, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *Prositala* Germain, 1915 (gender: feminine), type species by original designation *Sitala (Prositala) fernandopoensis* Germain, 1915, with the endorsement that it is to be given precedence over the name *Massaihelix* Germain, 1913 whenever the two are considered to be synonyms;
 - (b) *Massaihelix* Germain, 1913 (gender: feminine), type species by monotypy *Helix butumbiana* von Martens, 1895, with the endorsement that it is not to be given priority over the name *Prositala* Germain, 1915 whenever the two are considered to be synonyms;
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *fernandopoensis* Germain, 1915, as published in the binomen *Sitala (Prositala) fernandopoensis* (specific name of the type species of *Prositala* Germain, 1915);
 - (b) *butumbiana* von Martens, 1895, as published in the binomen *Helix butumbiana* (specific name of the type species of *Massaihelix* Germain, 1913).

References

- Bruggen, A.C. van. 1993. Studies on the terrestrial molluscs of Malawi, an interim progress report with additions to the check-list. *Archiv für Molluskenkunde*, **122**: 99–111.
- Bruggen, A.C. van & Van Goethem, J.L. 2001. Prolegomena for a checklist of the terrestrial molluscs of the Upemba National Park, Katanga, D.R. Congo. *Bulletin de l'Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique, Biologie*, **71**: 151–168.
- Connolly, M. 1928. The non-marine Mollusca of Sierra Leone. *Annals and Magazine of Natural History*, (10)1: 529–551.

- Fischer-Piette, E.** 1947. Nécrologie Louis Germain 1878–1942. *Journal de Conchyliologie*, **87**: 85–95.
- Germain, L.** 1913. Contributions à la faune malacologique de l'Afrique Equatoriale: XXXIX. Un nouveau genre d'Helicidae de l'Est africain. *Bulletin du Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris*, **19**: 349–352.
- Germain, L.** 1915. Contributions à la faune malacologique de l'Afrique Equatoriale: XLI. Mollusques nouveaux des îles du Golfe de Guinée. *Bulletin du Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris*, **21**: 283–290.
- Germain, L.** 1916. Etudes sur les mollusques terrestres et fluviatiles recueillis par L. Fea pendant son voyage en Afrique occidentale et aux îles du Golfe de Guinée. *Annali del Museo Civico di Storia Naturale Giacomo Doria, Genova*, **47**: 150–337.
- Martens, E. von.** 1895. Neue Land- und Süßwasser-Schnecken aus Ost-Afrika. *Nachrichtsblatt der Deutschen Malakozoologischen Gesellschaft*, **27**: 175–187.
- Millard, V.** 1997. *Classification of Mollusca. A classification of worldwide Mollusca*. 544 pp. Rhine Road, South Africa.
- Schileyko, A.A.** 2001. Treatise on recent terrestrial pulmonate molluscs. Part 7. Endodontidae, Thyrophorellidae, Charopidae. *Ruthenica, Suppl.* **2**: 881–1034.
- Tattersfield, P., Seddon, M.B. & Lange, C.N.** 2001. Land-snail faunas in indigenous rainforest and commercial forestry plantations in Kakamega Forest, western Kenya. *Biodiversity and Conservation*, **10**: 1809–1829.
- Thiele, J.** 1931. *Handbuch der systematischen Weichtierkunde*, **1**(2): 377–778.
- Vaught, K.C.** 1989. *A classification of the living Mollusca*. xii, 195 pp. Melbourne, Florida.
- Verdcourt, B.** 1969. On the systematic position of some East African Helicidae I. *Archiv für Molluskenkunde*, **99**: 175–185.
- Verdcourt, B.** 1972. The zoogeography of the non-marine Mollusca of East Africa. *Journal of Conchology*, **27**: 291–348.
- Verdcourt, B.** 1983a. The identity of *Helix butumbiana* von Martens (Pulmonata: Endodontidae sensu lato). *Journal of Conchology*, **31**: 179–184.
- Verdcourt, B.** 1983b. A list of the non-marine Mollusca of East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, excluding Lake Malawi). *Achatina*, **11**: 200–239.
- Verdcourt, B.** 1984. Discontinuities in the distribution of some East African land snails. Pp. 134–155 in Solem, A. & van Bruggen, A.C. (Eds.), *Worldwide snails*. Leiden.
- Verdcourt, B.** 1991. Some notes on East African endodontoid snails—Part 1. *Conchologist's Newsletter*, **116**: 352–359.
- Winter, A.J. de.** 1990. On some West African land snails (Gastropoda: Pulmonata). *Journal of Conchology*, **33**: 305–309.
- Zilch, A.** 1960. Gastropoda Euthyneura. Pp. 601–834 in Wenz, W. (Ed.), *Gastropoda, Handbuch der Paläozoologie*, **6**(2): 1–XII, 1–834. Berlin.

Acknowledgement of receipt of this application was published in BZN **59**: 161.

Comments on this case are invited for publication (subject to editing) in the *Bulletin*; they should be sent to the Executive Secretary, I.C.Z.N., c/o The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, U.K. (e-mail: iczn@nhm.ac.uk).